

The Leesburg Planning Commission met on Monday, April 4, 2005 in the Council Chambers, 25 West Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia. Staff members present were Susan Swift, Mike Freda, Nagi Elsewassi and Linda DeFranco

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Vaughan.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Vaughan
Commissioner Bangert
Commissioner Kalriess
Commissioner Wright

Absent: Commissioner Barnes
Commissioner Hoovler
Commissioner Jones
Mayor Umstattd

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Wright moved to adopt the agenda as presented:

Motion: Wright
Second: Bangert
Carried: 4-0

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Chairman Vaughan reviewed the agenda for this evening's meeting.

PETITIONERS

None

ZONING

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mike Freda, Budget Officer for the Town, gave a presentation on the current CIP projects scheduled to be funded in the new budget. There are 74 projects slated at a cost of \$139.6 million. The General Fund has 60 projects totaling \$66.8 million, Utilities Fund has 12 projects totaling \$69.4 million, and the Airport Fund has 2 projects at a cost of \$3.4 million. Major projects under the General Fund include Wayfinding Signs, the Catoctin Circle Trail, Ida Lee Trail, Phase II, Lowenbach Subdivision, West market Street Sidewalk and Drainage, Harrison Street, Ft. Evan Road Sidewalk and Drainage Improvements, and drainage projects on Edwards Ferry Road and Dry Mill Road. The Utilities Fund includes the Water Pollution Control Plant Expansion, Water System Improvements. The Airport Fund project includes perimeter fencing. Mr. Freda went on to discuss the sources of funding for these CIP projects.

Nagi Elsewassi, CIP Director, stated that the emphasis was on drainage and transportation. Chairman Vaughan asked him how they identified the areas for drainage improvements. Mr. Elsewassi said it was a compilation of complaints over the years that included the number of properties affected, severity of flooding, and number of times the area floods. Each area was reviewed for type of flooding, e.g., yard flooding vs. basement flooding, etc. Those areas with the greatest amount of points were then selected for the drainage improvements.

At this time Chairman Vaughan asked for anyone in the public to come forward and speak. There were no speakers.

Commissioner Bangert asked Mr. Elsewassi regarding the town branch improvements at Mosby Drive and what they entailed. Will there be more rip rap? Mr. Elsewassi said they were going to use a method that allows the water to flow in a natural path. Along with that, they may use armour block which is a product that stabilizes the banks and allows grass to grow through it. Ms. Bangert went on to ask why there were so many new drainage projects, is this caused by new construction? Poor engineering? Mr. Elsewassi said that much of the new development took place upstream. Many years ago the design standards were poor and some houses were actually built in floodplains along Tuscarora Creek and Town Branch. Design standards are now in place that deal with development in these areas. Ms. Bangert asked Mr. Freda what the \$2 million in donations was. Mr. Freda responded that these are actually small proffers that are collected. She went on to ask how the cash flow was doing in the utility funds. Mr. Freda said they are reviewing all of the rates, so far it is positive.

Commissioner Wright asked why the Pershing/Wilson drainage project funding was still in this CIP. He thought that funding had been done in previous budgets. Mr. Elsewassi said this was because of increased costs to finish the project.

Commissioner Kalriess had some concerns about increased runoff from new developments. Mr. Elsewassi said that they are trench studies and feel that they are correcting many of these. Mr. Kalriess then asked about armour block, is this like a

SPECIAL MEETING

gabion? Mr. Elsewassi explained that it was a honeycomb type material that allowed grass to grow between it. Mr. Kalriess then asked why the cost of the utility lines maintenance building was so high? Mr. Elsewassi said it was an increase in building costs.

Commissioner Vaughan asked why the curb and gutter improvements near the high school were being funded by the town. Mr. Elsewassi pointed out that the area that is being finished is not part of the high school improvement project.

Chairman Vaughan then asked that the Commission review all of the CIP categories and comment accordingly.

General Government

Commissioner Bangert spoke about the fabric of the wayfinding signs, will this be in the CIP each year? Also, the bus shelter at Harrison Street may not be the best spot. The people generally go inside the building to wait. Isn't there a better, more logical location for a bus shelter. Mr. Freda said the County doesn't want the people inside the lobby. With regard to the banners, they will not be in the CIP yearly because they are for special events and should last some time.

Commissioner Wright asked if the three general government projects were all new this year. Mr. Freda said that the integrated management system was part of the previous budget but they decided to separate it out for future budgets.

Chairman Vaughan asked if there was a bus shelter at the outlet mall. This is a major location and there definitely should be a shelter there. Mr. Freda said that this really needed to be addressed by Calvin Grow.

Parks and Recreation

Commissioner Bangert asked to make sure the trail projects are dealt with, e.g. Harrison Street Trail. It is her understanding that the Barber and Ross site application is forthcoming and she feels it would be beneficial to the area to complete the trail. Also the Meadowbrook projects, did they proffer anything for the trail along Rt. 15S? She also asked if there were plans for additional restroom facilities at the soccer/lacrosse fields.

Commissioner Wright asked about the tennis structure and whether this was funded by the Symington funds. Mr. Freda said that they will borrow from the Symington funds and replace the money with operating funds from the new structure. Mr. Wright said that the major funding for Veterans Park seems to have been moved forward by several years. Mr. Freda said that yes, this had been move forward.

Commissioner Kalriess had some more questions on Veterans Park. How much area is being improved. Mr. Freda said that he did not have that answer. Mr. Kalriess said that this was then basically committed for further study. Mr. Freda said yes, that was true.

Chairman Vaughan also addressed the South Harrison Street trail. He referred to the Middleburg Bank project with regard to the S. Harrison Street trail. There were some funds set aside for this trail but it has not yet been completed. He would like to see this trail put back into the CIP, be completed, and be named the Dave Kennedy trail. Commissioner Kennedy was very concerned that this trail be completed. Mr. Vaughan then asked about the Catoctin Circle trail and its varying widths. He said there should be a minimum width of 8' with 10' being more ideal.

Streets and Highways

Commissioner Bangert asked about the traffic light at East Market and Edwards Ferry and Catoctin Circle and Edwards Ferry Road. Most of the traffic is because of the courts and she is not happy that the town is ending up with the cost for these. Also, several residents said that the intersection at Edwards Ferry and Catoctin really didn't need a traffic light, that the intersection works well now as a four-way stop.

Commissioner Wright said he had a problem envisioning how a traffic light would work at the intersection of North King Street and North Street. He also agreed that the traffic light at Catoctin Circle and Edwards Ferry Road didn't seem necessary. He feels that the traffic flows well in the area. His big concern is the fact that Battlefield Parkway seems to get pushed off the CIP list, pushing it further into the future. The citizens keep getting told that the project will be done by 2009, however, each year it gets pushed off. He would like to find a way to be honest with the citizens and not delay funding on important transportation and drainage projects. Get those projects done before new ones are added. It would be more important to begin Battlefield Parkway moved along than to build Veterans Park.

Commissioner Kalriess asked about project #27, a right turn only lane from Edwards Ferry Road. With regard to the widening of Route 15, since the town share is only 2%, please make sure that whatever sound attenuation is used there is no concrete retaining wall. This is the gateway to town and should be made attractive. He also expressed concern about Sycolin Road becoming an undivided four-lane road. There will be a lot of traffic on this road and he wonders if this type of road will be sufficient. Susan Swift said the design does not take the new housing units into account. Mr. Kalriess said there are major transportation issues in that area, he would like Council to look at projects that are useful, perhaps drop a park for a road.

Chairman Vaughan also addressed the right turn lane from Edwards Ferry Road onto the Rt. 15 Bypass. He is concerned that traffic utilizing that turn will then attempt to get to the very left hand lane to go left onto Ft. Evans Drive. He recommends that there be a fourth lane put in, two right turn lanes from Edwards Ferry, put a curb between the two turn lanes. The first right will go straight only on Rt. 15, the second right will allow

SPECIAL MEETING

those people to go left on Ft. Evans. He has seen many crazy maneuvers by motorists trying to get to the Ft. Evans businesses and hopes that a design keeps safety in mind.

Storm Drainage

Commissioner Bangert said that she was very glad to see that the Ft. Evans Road Sidewalk and drainage improvements are finally going to be completed.

Commissioner Wright asked about the Woodberry, Turner and Mosby projects delay. He feels that the drainage improvements should be completed. Perhaps they should delay some parks and recreation projects so that these can be complete.

Commissioner Kalriess asked if there was a way that we could educate developers on newer methods of stormwater management and low impact design. Mr. Freda said that Engineering and Public Works is working on a manual to help guide developers through the process within town. Mr. Kalriess feels strongly that there is a way to educate the developers. Susan Swift said that when the stormwater engineer comes on board, there will be revisions to the DCSM that will assist in this.

Chairman Vaughan asked that they ensure that any CIP project near a new application needs to be reviewed very closely. We should do everything we can to get some of the necessary projects proffered.

Buildings, grounds and equipment

Chairman Vaughan asked where the total public works cost number was coming from. Mr. Freda explained that they are a carryover from the previous page.

Utility Lines

No comments

Water Supply

Commissioner Kalriess asked whether the water pressure in the southwest quadrant of town would be adequate pending the major potential residential development in that area.

Commissioner Bangert said there would be a site proffered for an additional tank pending the approval of potential development.

Chairman Vaughan asked if the 15mgd put into the CIP was sufficient.

Water Pollution Control

No comments

Airport

Commissioner Bangert stated that should the County make a decision on Crosstrails she wants to see this project made a part of their proffer package.

Commissioner Wright asked if there had been a land acquisition for airport improvements, was this done? Mr. Freda said it was being done in small parcels, but now will be accelerated to purchase the entire parcel.

At this point Chairman Vaughan said this public hearing would remain open for ten days. Mr. Freda said that this would go to Council on the 26th of April. Commissioner Wright asked if this would be back on the agenda for the meeting on the 21st of April.

Commissioner Bangert said the CIP is important and she would like to see the public be able to give input. She would also like to see the comments included in the minutes for tonight's meeting and have them sent on to Council.

Susan Swift also asked that they make a separate motion for the naming of the South Harrison Street Trail.

Commissioner Bangert moved that the South Harrison Street Trail be named in memory of Dave Kennedy.

Motion:	Bangert
Second:	Wright
Carried:	4-0

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Trip Muldrow of Arnett Muldrow presented the Planning Commission with an overview of ideas for the Crescent District in Leesburg. The Town Plan and the central area plan (Crescent District) have a strong overlap. There is some strong language regarding the extension of the H-1 district, and utilizing the H-1 and 2 district guidelines. New construction in the old and historic district should not mimic styles, but a compatible style should be sought out. They also reviewed the South Harrison Street redevelopment plan (1982). At that time the area was designated as industrial which has not really happened. The Crossroads group has some suggestions on how they would like to see the area redeveloped.

The County judicial expansion could impact this area, especially if it incorporates a parking garage. Many people would like to see the downtown expand and have a mix of uses. Some challenges are how to keep people downtown, keep the road network consistent within the town. The Liberty Street Lot is on a landfill, the auto recycler is on a quarry, there is some floodplain area to deal with. People would like to see gathering spaces, a walkable area, affordable housing incorporated, and unique architecture, along with greenspace.

The Do and Don't list for this area includes: Don't Ashburn the architecture; Don't delay; Do underground utilities; Don't forget Leesburg. It is not a Bypass; Do gauge and understand the surroundings; Don't duplicate; Do mix the uses; Do enhance Economic Development; Do understand the historic character of the area and Do consider attractive parking.

Commissioner Kalriess asked what was meant by competing town centers. Mr. Muldrow responded that the ideal was not to mimic the downtown area. Build something different but complimentary. Mr. Kalriess asked if an historic district expansion was discussed at all for this area. Mr. Muldrow said the H-1 and H-2 districts don't allow for a good transition. This is something that needs further review. Mr. Kalriess spoke about performing arts centers and what money losers they tend to be. They require benefactors, land and money commitment. In order to have a quality center, there needs to be a strong commitment and significant push to make it happen.

Commissioner Wright thanked Mr. Muldrow for his presentation. He said that his concern is the County judicial expansion and its potential impact on the Crescent District. Mr. Muldrow said that this expansion may or may not impact the area and is still a distant plan.

Commissioner Bangert asked what the 150,000s.f. for county expansion was going to be used for? Administrative? Susan Swift said it was for Community Development related use. This is a placeholder as something needed, but is not currently funded. Ms. Bangert asked if they were looking for higher density in residential, or commercial or a combination of both. Mr. Muldrow said it was really a mix, the ideal way to put in mixed use. They are still closely reviewing all of this. Ms. Bangert asked what was meant by using old construction vs. new construction. Mr. Muldrow said buildings should reflect when they were built. They need to make the use compatible but not necessarily the "Williamsburg" look. The Commissioner asked if they had met with Mitchell and Best and how their application would fit into the plans for the Crescent District. Mr. Muldrow said they had met and this application is paralleling the Crescent District Plan which should give them a good opportunity to be able to build within the desired parameters of the new plan. Scott Mingonet said the various plans are opening up more dialogue allowing things to work through the Town Plan.

Chairman Vaughan asked Mr. Muldrow if he would make this presentation to the BAR. Right now they seem to want to keep things somewhat cookie cutter. With respect to the walkability, etc., how do the terms relate to traffic and parking. What are the amenities. How do we design a project that will get people out of their cars and make it walkable and desirable. Mr. Muldrow mentioned road widths, street trees, attractive destinations. Mr. Vaughan said that after the process of developing the Crescent District in a nice, attractive manner, what if people don't come? No one comes to downtown now because there is insufficient parking. Mr. Muldrow said that this was a challenge. They need to draw people into the area, leaving their cars outside of the area. It needs to become a pedestrian hub.

Susan Swift said that parking will be looked at after the rest of the development and the intensity has been determined. Mr. Mignonet said there is no silver bullet, it will take much time and attitude realignment, using a proactive stance to come to a plan that will be acceptable to a variety of people.

Commissioner Kalriess asked what the basis for height restriction was in Leesburg. Susan Swift responded that she had heard it was 45 feet, no higher than the Courthouse, although she has not seen this written anywhere.

Chairman Vaughan asked two people in the audience if they had any comment on the previous presentation.

Phoebe Kilby of Sympoetica said they work for Mitchell and Best and were just curious about the presentation being done.

Commissioner Bangert asked when the consultants would be back to present to the commission. May 12 would be the date for a special meeting on this.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58pm.

Prepared by:**Approved by:**

Linda DeFranco, Commission Clerk

Clifton Vaughan, Chairman